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### St. Anthony's Church relies on talents of local artists for art used in church

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Ryan 12-6-63

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The new St. Anthony's Church now rising in Missoula is utilizing an ancient tradition of the Roman Catholic Church in its structure: wherever possible rely on the talents of local artists for the production of art objects to be used in the church.

This is what the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Dennis Meade told an audience this week in discussing various art objects in the church that are being produced by two Montana State University professors of art. The two are Walter Hook and Rudy Autio, the former a specialist in development of concrete art forms, and the latter a well known ceramic sculptor.

Hook's contributions to the new church include overall art consultation plus a set of 14 Stations of the Cross in the church interior and large incised concrete panels for the exterior depicting the 12 Apostles. Autio's major work for the church is a 28 foot tall ceramic figure of St. Anthony.

Much of Hook's work in casting the Stations and the exterior panels was accomplished in his home workshop. A concrete mixer and a vibrating set of forms were the principal machines necessary. The figures were first sculpted in cameo on fiber glass planks, then inserted in the forms for the deposit of a special concrete mix and reinforcing steel. In the church, the panels are utilized as structural members of the building, rather than as applied decoration.

Autio had to rent a barn in order to find enough room to shape and fire the large ceramic pieces necessary for the figure of St. Anthony. A great deal of precision had to be maintained in judging the shrinkage of the ceramic clay. Autio started out with "green" ceramic elements that totaled 31 feet in height, and that were reduced in the firing process to precisely 28 feet in order to fit the allotted space for the figure.

The church is expected to be ready for services this month but will not be fully completed until sometime next year.

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